

this; research shows that it is good for public health; and studies actually demonstrate real economic and energy saving benefits.

So, Madam President, I urge that we pass the Sunshine Protection Act and finally make Daylight Saving Time permanent.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

CHINA

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, 50 years ago this coming February, President Nixon made history as the first American President to visit the People's Republic of China. He thought that by inviting China to join what he called "the family of nations," he could incentivize the Chinese Communist Party to liberalize at home and refrain from exporting its brand of communism abroad.

That may sound naive because, as we look back on those 50 years, the changes President Nixon hoped for never came. But he held out hope for change because he had faith in the Chinese people. He was an incredible admirer of their culture and their remarkable history.

And even though these past few decades have proven Nixon wrong about the CCP, he was right to have faith in the people of China. That is why we have to be specific when we talk about what the future holds for our two countries.

The Chinese people and the Chinese Communist Party are not the same thing. In fact, the opposite is true. We have seen countless examples of the Chinese people's bravery, from pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong to 1989's protests in Tiananmen Square.

They were born deserving the same universal rights that we enjoy in the United States: freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and so many more.

They deserve to live in a country that recognizes those rights and understands that true power comes from the consent of the governed, not from the iron fist of the party oligarchy.

Unfortunately, that iron fist is how the CCP has kept its grip on power for so many decades, and they have shown no signs of slowing down under President Xi Jinping.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of President Nixon's groundbreaking trip, we need to reflect on what those 50 years have brought us.

China has not become a democracy. Instead, the Communist Party is weaponizing new technologies to consolidate their rule. Through what President Biden's chief adviser for Asia, Kurt Campbell, has called digital authoritarianism, the CCP can now track the Chinese people's every movement with facial recognition. They have developed a social credit system that ranks the likability and trustworthiness of hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens. Using these and other technologies, the CCP is committing genocide against their own people.

Since April 2017, the CCP has detained over 1 million leaders and other Muslims in specially built internment camps in Xinjiang province. These are Chinese citizens, and their own government is subjecting them to forced sterilization, sexual abuse, forced labor, physical and psychological torment, and political indoctrination.

This is government-sponsored ethnic cleansing, and now China is starting to carry out this kind of state-sponsored racism and genocide outside Xinjiang.

In the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the CCP is curtailing the use of the Mongolian language by shutting down Mongolian-language social media websites and prohibiting schools from teaching certain classes in Mongolian. The next steps could be similar to what we have seen in Xinjiang.

Sadly, ethnic minorities are not the only people to find themselves on the wrong side of the CCP's many abuses of power. Under President Xi, China has broken its promises to the free people of Hong Kong. Under the pretense of protecting national security, new laws have led to the arrest of thousands of people for doing nothing more than exercising their God-given rights.

Taken together, all these things paint a picture of a Chinese Government that is doubling down on its communist roots and doing whatever it takes to control its people.

None of this should surprise us. This is the same government that forcibly sterilized its citizens as part of its one-child policy, and gunned down thousands of students who were peacefully protesting in Tiananmen Square.

And now they are turning their attention abroad. They are growing more aggressive towards other countries by the day, in ways that comply with international norms and in ways that defy those norms.

In 2013, President Xi formally launched his signature foreign policy effort: the Belt and Road Initiative.

Through this program, China offers lucrative infrastructure investments and economic development deals to smaller and poorer nations. The ultimate goal is to create a global coalition that could challenge the long-standing network of alliances and partnerships that have been built by the United States. Since Belt and Road began, 139 countries have joined, and on every continent China is using it to expand their power.

But here is the catch: If developing countries that welcomed these investments want construction to continue on their new highway system or skyscraper, or if they want access to funding for future projects, they cannot speak out against China's actions. This is why leaders of Muslim-majority countries who have spoken out against these crimes in the past have suddenly fallen silent.

Just look at Turkish President Erdogan, who said China's crimes against the Uighurs are "a genocide, and there is no point in interpreting this otherwise."

He said that in 2009. Today, he won't even talk about it, and he has ordered the police to break up protests about these atrocities in Turkey.

Pakistan's Prime Minister, usually a champion for Muslims around the world, has also fallen under Belt and Road's spell. In June, he refused to answer questions about Xinjiang in an interview with Axios's Jonathan Swan.

China's other strategies for reshaping the rules-based international order are far less subtle. They are using the infrastructure they build to spy on foreign leaders or even take over disputed regions in neighboring countries.

In Ethiopia, the CCP offered to build the new headquarters of the African Union. African Union workers soon discovered that the building's Huawei servers had been shipping their data to Shanghai every day for years and that the building was riddled with Chinese surveillance devices.

This is a perfect example of China's strategy of military-civilian fusion, or the way the CCP forces so-called "private" corporations like Huawei to do their bidding.

Another example hit much closer to home. In 2016, the Chinese company with CCP ties tried to buy a hotel in San Diego. Well, the hotel has a view of Naval Base San Diego, the home port of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet. The deal was ultimately blocked, but the fact that such a transparent attempt to keep an eye on our forces almost went through is cause for serious concern.

China is also building artificial islands in the disputed South China Sea. Many in this body will recall when, in 2015, President Xi stood next to President Obama and he lied, saying that China does not intend to militarize those islands. He broke his pledge within a year.

Along with this geographic expansion, President Xi is investing in China's military. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, China now spends nearly three times as much on the People's Liberation Army as they did just 10 years ago. They now have the world's largest navy in terms of total number of ships, a title the U.S. held until 2 years ago.

China's navy currently numbers about 355 ships and submarines. They have 2 aircraft carriers and at least 32 destroyers, 48 frigates, and 65 attack submarines. This is not a navy designed to protect a coastline; this is a navy designed to project force on a global scale.

Former Deputy National Security Advisor Matthew Pottinger called what China is doing the "largest peacetime military buildup in the modern era, and maybe one of the largest in history." He said that in response to my questions at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing earlier in June.

And what is this new, more powerful military's highest priority?

The peaceful island of democracy, Taiwan. President Xi has been very clear about his desire to bring Taiwan

under the CCP's control. The only thing stopping him is 100 miles of ocean: the Taiwan Strait.

But the CCP's ambitions won't end with Taiwan. India, Japan, South Korea, and many countries in the South China Sea are feeling the effects of China's aggression in ways no one expected even a decade ago. And to back up their global agenda, the CCP is hard at work expanding China's nuclear arsenal.

As Admiral Richard, the commander of STRATCOM, wrote earlier this year:

China's nuclear weapon stockpile is expected to double—if not triple or quadruple—over the next decade.

A new report out yesterday from the Pentagon paints a worse picture. It predicts that China could have at least 1,000 nuclear warheads by 2030, roughly five times what they have now. As part of this expansion, China is building at least three new missile fields, each capable of holding over 100 ICBMs. And maybe most concerning, China recently tested an extremely sophisticated new weapons system that combines space capabilities with advanced hypersonics. This nuclear capable prototype could give China a unique edge over our own arsenal.

Madam President, this needs to be a wake-up call for us. We must change our approach to China. We can't keep pretending that these problems don't exist.

Thankfully, concern about China's rise is an area of bipartisan consensus here in Congress. But recognizing that there is a problem is not enough. We have to get our act together and we have to do something about it. There are many ways for us to push back against the CCP, but, by far, the most fundamental thing we can do to safeguard against China's rise is to invest in our military.

The old adage "peace through strength" still applies today, but the Biden administration has proposed raising defense spending by only 1.6 percent, and taking this year's inflation into account, that means we have a proposed cut. That defies basic logic. The world is not getting safer. Threats like China are not going away.

When we met earlier this year to review the President's budget request and write our annual defense authorization bill, the Senate Armed Services Committee debated defense cuts.

What was the result?

A huge bipartisan majority—25 of the 26 members—voted to authorize an additional \$25 billion in defense spending, which primarily supported the unfunded priorities of our commanders.

This provides our military with the real budget growth necessary to keep pace with an adversary like China. It makes critical investments in readiness and in modernization, as well as in research and development programs that help America keep our technological edge.

It also includes a number of specific investments that would strengthen our

force posture in the Indo-Pacific theater.

Most importantly, the bill authorizes an additional \$230 million to begin improving missile defense capabilities on Guam. Guam is a key element of our regional presence, but it has been increasingly threatened by China's growing arsenal. INDOPACOM commanders have warned of this threat since 2019, and the situation has only grown direr since then.

The resources authorized by this bill would begin to address this threat, and by improving our defensive capabilities in the region, we can keep conflict from beginning in the first place.

Like many of my colleagues, I am at a loss to explain why the Democratic leader hasn't brought the NDAA to the floor. Even if we voted on it today, this would still be one of the latest NDAA votes in history.

So as we celebrate Veterans Day next week and consider the sacrifice and service of America's bravest, we should all remember our responsibility as Members of Congress, to give our military men and women the resources they need to successfully complete the missions that they are given. We cannot afford to delay any longer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

BUILD BACK BETTER AGENDA

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, everything we are doing to lead our country to build back better from this pandemic is about putting workers at the center of our economy. It is about raising wages and bringing down costs.

We know what has happened in this country in the last decade. We have seen profits go up. We have seen the stock market go skyward. We have seen executive compensation explode upward. Yet wages in Nevada and Ohio and all over this country have essentially been flat. That is why this Build Back Better plan is about raising wages and bringing down costs.

We know what is wrong with our country. I said 20 years. It has been 30 years, 40 years where productivity has gone up. Workers are earning more and more for their companies and for their bosses, but they simply aren't sharing in the wealth that they have created. They have simply seen their wages flat.

It has gotten more and more expensive for families to raise a family and build a middle-class life. Healthcare, childcare, prescription drugs, higher education, housing are things the Presiding Officer and I have worked on in the Banking and Housing Committee.

Costs have doubled, tripled, quadrupled since people my age were trying to go to school and start a family. Meanwhile, people's hard work isn't paying off.

I remember in our Banking Committee, we did a hearing. It was more of a listening session. It was one where Senators were not asking questions. It was listening to people, which we should probably do more often. It was called the "Dignity of Work" session.

One woman was from southern West Virginia, who struggled her whole life and, clearly, was working hard. She said the words "working" and "poor" should not be in the same sentence. Think about that. She has worked all her life. She is making \$13—she didn't go to Harvard. She didn't go to Ohio State. She worked all her life. She worked to raise kids. She is still making \$12, \$13, \$14 an hour—and that, Madam President, as costs only ever seem to go up. Even middle-class families don't feel stable. That was before the pandemic.

We know that in this country, before the pandemic, a quarter of people paid more than half their income—more than half their income—in housing, in rent. That means if one thing happens in their lives—their car breaks down; their child gets sick, has to stay home from school; they maybe have a minor workplace injury and miss a week of work—everything can go wrong. Their lives can turn upside down because they can be evicted.

Then what happens?

We know this pandemic has upended the global economy. Supply chains are struggling. People feel their budget squeezed. They are anxious about whether prices that have gone up will ever go back down.

We heard a lot of politicians, particularly in this body, try to stoke families' anxiety for their own political gain, but they don't offer solutions. Their only answer is: Let's take power away from workers.

They think the only way to keep prices low is to keep wages even lower. That is a false choice.

We work on real solutions to bring down the biggest cost Americans face for the long term and to help families keep up with the cost of living.

Housing, childcare, healthcare—those are three of the biggest items in any family's budget. Build Back Better tackles all of them.

On the Banking and Housing Committee, everything we are doing is about making housing more affordable, whether you pay a mortgage or whether you pay rent. Housing is just way too expensive and not available to enough people, plain and simple. We need to build more homes people can afford. We need to make the houses and the townhouses and the apartments we already have more affordable, and we need to make it affordable to buy a home.

I visit communities in Ohio all the time with houses that look affordable. They are listed, maybe, at even \$50,000 or \$75,000, but families can't come up with a down payment or sometimes they can't find lenders to make the loans. Sometimes we see these lower cost properties snapped up by private equity—by investors paying cash. We are working to fix that with plans like targeted down payment assistance, expanding access to lower cost mortgages.

Look at healthcare for a moment. Monthly premiums, deductibles, and